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Through the Wilderness———
—————to Richmond.

THROUGH THE WILDERNESS

— TO —

RICHMOND.



A PAPER READ BEFORE THE

Ohio Commandery

— OF THE —

LOYAL LEGION OF THE UNITED STATES.

SEPTEMBER 3, 1884.

BY COMPANION

ASA B. ISHAM,

Late First Lieutenant Company F, 7th Michigan Volunteer Cavalry.

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THROUGH THE WILDERNESS TO RICHMOND.

The cavalry of the Army of the Potomac never set out upon a campaign in lighter marching order than that of 1864, when it took up the march toward Richmond. One wagon to a regiment and two lead horses to each company constituted the transportation equipment. It was generally realized by the troops that a campaign of unusual severity was before them; hence, every man put as little burden upon himself and horse as possible, carrying nothing that he could do without. If one had a preference for a blanket, he left behind his overcoat; or, if the overcoat was thought indispensable, the blanket was thrown out. Cooking utensils were commonly reduced to a pint tincup and a half of a canteen, which latter, with a stick split at one end for a handle, served for a frying and stewing pan. Yet some, who were likely to mourn for "the flesh pots of Egypt" in the wilderness, clung fondly to a light skillet and a coffee-pot.

On the 4th of May, 1864, the camps around Culpepper Court-house were broken, and the columns were set in motion for the Rapidan. Quietly the march was conducted; conversation was not indulged in to any great extent, every one being apparently occupied by his own reflections. The soil moved over had been the scene of many a conflict, to which recollection recurred, and a fresh encounter was momentarily looked for, where the foe had been so often met. Bivouacking for the night at Stony Mountain, the march was resumed at 3 o'clock upon the morning of the 5th, crossing the Rapidan at Ely's Ford.

Upon reaching the high ground in the vicinity of Chancellorsville, a number of colored regiments were overtaken, the first ever seen by the Army of the Potomac. They had tents pitched, arms stacked, and were disporting themselves in their bare feet. Their pedal extremities and the army brogan did not seem to be exactly natural affinities. Their union produced a most uncomfortable chafing of protuberances, so that, while the colored brother cherished his shoe-leather, and suffered the pains of martyrdom with it upon show occasions, he much preferred to carry it upon his back during the steady plodding of a campaign. To judge from expressions, these fellows meant "business." They were very anxious to receive information concerning the whereabouts of the enemy. They had been earnestly seeking him without success. They had an impression that the enemy, apprised of their coming, was rapidly getting out of the way, and they were fearful that they might not be able to catch up with him. It was suggested that we, being mounted, could, perhaps, surround and head him off, in which case they would come up and make short work of him. This we promised to do, to their evident delight, and they were left in the rear. The poor fellows found the "Johnny Rebs" many times, often to their sorrow, before the campaign was over, and upon some occasions, too, they found that they turned up when they were not being hunted for.

A halt was made, in the evening, near the slope of the high plateau overlooking the wilderness, not a great distance in advance of General Grant's headquarters. At 2 o'clock, on the evening of the 6th, we were again in the saddle, and pressing toward the front by the way of the Furnace Road. In the descent from the upper level, a scene long to be remembered was presented to the vision. Fires had been lighted up by the sides of the roads, which revealed, by their glare, long lines of infantry, cavalry and artillery, filling up the tortuous ways in all directions, in wavy motion, like the undulations of some vast serpent. Then, a blast furnace, with its accumulated stores of fuel, broke out in grand conflagra-

tion, illuminating a vast extent of country by its lurid light. The black, impenetrable forest spread out in all directions, the central mass of flame, the winding streaks of fire diverging therefrom, and here and there disclosing moving, writhing, sinuous, slender, long extended forms,—all combined to impress upon the mind a preternatural idea of the spectacle, as though the demon of destruction was floundering and belching out tongues and volumes of flame in the murky depths below. Now and then our advance guard would press too hastily upon the retiring rear guard of the enemy, when the far-off rattle of musketry and subdued shouts would be borne to the ear, and the undulations in the columns would become more marked. But soon we were threading the mazes of the wilderness, circling about the hosts of rebellion, which the darkness and the woods shut out from sight. Lively fusillades of musketry, not far removed, halts in readiness for action, were of frequent occurrence; but, with these exceptions, this night's march was not dissimilar to other night marches through a forest growth. All such marches are attended with such mishaps as falling into "chug-holes," stumbling over obstructions, getting caught in the snares of log bridges and rough pieces of "corduroy," and running foul of overhanging branches, with results usually more annoying than grave, though sometimes serious for horse, or rider, or both. The moral nature receives a terrible wrench, when, from a half-sleeping, dreaming state, one is suddenly precipitated into a mud-hole, hung upon a limb, or made to practice a grand balancing feat by a tumble over some obstacle in the way. While, doubtless, the cavalry contained many "souls made perfect," these accidents seemed only to befall the wholly unregenerate, if the expressions uttered upon such occasions may be taken in evidence. But such incidents banished sleepiness by the lively sallies interchanged between the one who had "fallen into the pit" and his comrades, enlivened the spirits, and made refreshing breaks to all but the victim, in the monotony of the dull, plodding hours.

Toward morning, 6th of May, a position was taken up at the intersection of the Brock Pike and the Furnace Road, upon the extreme left of the Union line of battle, joining onto the 2d (Hancock's) corps. Morning had not long dawned when the ball opened, by the driving in of the pickets established upon the pike. The thunder of artillery and the continuous, vibrating roll of heavy musketry, heard upon the right, told that the infantry was already hard at work. Passing out from the woods into an opening, we were brought up "front into line," to arrest the progress of a regiment which was falling back, in great confusion, before an onslaught of the enemy; the officer's efforts and shouts of "*Rally! Rally! HALT!*" and "*Right about, WHEEL!*" being of none effect. With a few expressions of good-natured railery, they were halted and reformed. And they went back right gallantly, in splendid form, pushing the enemy before them.

The battle-ground was a clearing, over a surface slightly rolling, including an area of, perhaps, forty acres, surrounded by woods upon all sides. On the Confederate side of the field were two batteries of light artillery, which were opposed by eight pieces of artillery upon our side. The action of that day, as far as it pertained to the 1st Cavalry Division (Torbert's) and the enemy in its front, consisted of an artillery duel, charges and countercharges of mounted cavalry across the field, and fighting dismounted in the woods. Evening found us masters of the field, the enemy, under Fitz Hugh Lee, having been forced to retire with heavy loss, leaving his dead and wounded, and many prisoners, in our hands.

An episode of the day was a panic in the lead-horse caravan, which had been left upon the side of the road in our rear. When the cannon balls and shells began to crash through the woods in great abundance, the contrabands and skulkers, who were interested in the welfare of the lead horses, deemed it incumbent upon themselves to get these beasts of burden into safer quarters. They were led off by one named Malachi, but more familiarly known as "Bones," a sad-eyed contraband, whose bullet-head, not much larger than a pint

measure, was surmounted by a coon-skin covering of rare design. He was mounted, without saddle or bridle, upon a lame animal which went upon three legs, and he steered him by means of a hickory club, carried in his good right hand. They were just getting started when a shell went screaming through the tree-tops, right over the cavalcade, and sending down upon it a shower of small twigs. "Bones" uttered a wild "Aa, yi," turned his eyes toward heaven, so that only the whites were visible, belabored his poor beast into a run, and, with the rest of the procession in close pursuit, struck out for the rear of Hancock's corps. This was but rushing from "the frying pan into the fire," and they soon turned back, more terror-stricken than before, in a mad gallop to their previous location, only to fly off again at the sound of shrieking missiles. An officer sent back to look after them found them rushing, pell-mell, back and forth, at the top of their speed. So wild with affright were they that he could exercise no control over them, until, giving chase, he unhorsed "Bones" by the liberal application of the flat of a sabre about that worthy's head and shoulders. The leader being thus dethroned, order was easily restored, and a refuge found for them beyond the line of fire.

In obedience to orders, we moved back to the furnace to camp that night, reaching there sometime after dark. Here all the buglers in the command were sent out into the woods, to all points of the compass, and in sweet disconcert, they blew, and repeated over and over again, all the calls in the regulations, except the one for quinine. They bugled for at least an hour, and if their wind held out, they may have blown all night for all that the deponent knoweth to the contrary. Tired soldiers do not lose any sleep on account of a little serenade like that. This musical demonstration was for the sole benefit of the rebels, in order to deceive as to the force, location and movements of the cavalry; but had it been made more exclusive by surrounding Lee's army with the buglers, the impression might have been more decided, and the results might, perhaps, have been as astonishing as a horn-blowing performance once upon a time at ancient Jericho.

Daylight of the 7th of May found us back again in the position of the day before. Early in the forenoon, in a short, but severe engagement out on the Brock pike, the 1st Michigan Cavalry drove back the enemy toward Todd's Tavern, which was soon after occupied by the 2d Division, under General Gregg. The remainder of the day was whiled away in light skirmishing, and excursions to unknown points on the infantry lines, where we were formed in readiness for action at the edges of open spaces. The infantry, however, proved capable of holding its own; no call was made upon us for assistance, and we went back to our own particular battle possession. Here we remained mounted, in line of battle, until after dark, before orders were given to dismount and bivouac. The stench from decomposing horses, thickly strewn over the field, was almost stifling. It seemed nearly strong enough to arrest the course of bullets, which were flying about promiscuously in the darkness, since the enemy had again appeared on our front, and a lively interchange of leaden compliments was in progress between the picket lines, but a short distance removed. There was no hunting about for a choice spot upon which to rest, but each one nestled closely into the lap of mother earth wherever he was, however much he might entertain views of more desirable positions. Neither were noses turned up at dead animals when they could be felt within arms reach. In fact, a snug berth under the lee of a dead horse, giving off odors of putrefaction, is not to be despised when wild picket firing, at short range, is indulged in upon a dark night. Those who found, in the morning, that they had slept upon the entrails of disemboweled steeds derived satisfaction from the fact that they had enjoyed softer beds than their companions.

Daylight of the morning of the 8th brought the revelation that the enemy had stolen away in the night. We then moved over to Todd's Tavern. On the way we were compelled to shoot some riderless horses, wounded in the legs, since they had no notion of being deserted, but persisted in crowding into places in the ranks and endeavoring to keep up

with the column. The neighings of the poor beasts, as they were dropped by the wayside, were almost human in their plaintiveness. From Todd's Tavern we marched to Silver, on the Fredericksburg plank road, where the entire Cavalry Corps was massed, and where we spent the night.

Thus was our service in the wilderness concluded. Nothing could be seen beyond the little open stretch before us, and, for a knowledge of what had transpired about us, we had been dependent entirely upon the sense of hearing. We judged, by the sounds of conflict which we had heard, that a great battle had been fought, but we knew no more respecting the result than the man in the moon. As there was no enemy to molest us, we took it that he had been worsted. We had but vague ideas concerning the topography of the country about us, and our relative position to the rest of the forces. The Furnace was the central point, to our minds. We knew that the road to our rear led back there, but that was about all we did know with certainty, since our marches were nearly all made at night. We had glimpses of bits of road filled up with infantry columns, or with ambulances for the wounded, of woods choked with underbrush and fallen timber, and of openings covered with a growth of scrub bushes, and it was the predominating idea, in the line, that the enemy was everywhere in position at the farther side of such clearings.

On the morning of the 9th of May, the Cavalry Corps started on a raid to Richmond, around the right flank of Lee's army, the 1st brigade of the 1st division having the advance. In moving off we passed through the Provisional 9th Corps, which was a motley aggregation, consisting of heavy artillery regiments, taken from the forts around Washington, Baltimore and Fortress Monroe, and pressed into service as infantry, dismounted cavalry regiments, negro troops, and the odds and ends of the service. All, except the colored troops, were growling and grumbling, declaring that they had never enlisted for any such service, and that they would not fight. Whenever they caught sight of a general officer, they set up the cry of "*Hard tack! Hard tack! Rations!*" The soldiers

in the cavalry columns, riding by "chaffed" them unmercifully. It was said that they could not eat hard tack if it was given them. They ought to have soft bread, and butter, terrapin soup, oysters and custard. Fears were expressed that they would catch dreadful colds without their feather beds. It was not intended that they should fight; they were only for the "darkies" to pile up for breastworks, etc. There was a new regiment, which had never been mounted, called the 1st New Jersey Hussars. The seams and edges of their jackets were trimmed with yellow lace, while the breast was ornamented with parallel stripes of the same material, running crosswise, about one inch apart, with loops at the sides and centre, surrounding brass buttons. Hence they received the name of "Butterflies." "Hello, butterflies," was the salutation, "you have got 'em bad." "There is nothing like good foot exercise for the 'yallers.'" The prospects for the corn crop were inquired after, and it was suggested that it was not the design they should fight as infantry; they were simply for the purpose of scaring the buzzards off from the lazy heavy artillery until the rebels had a chance to wake them up. It is but fair to record that the retorts were as numerous and pungent as the direct thrusts. They inquired if the clearness of our voices was not due to sucking eggs. Our stealing, they asserted, did the Confederacy infinitely more harm than our fighting. We must have heard a rooster crow to be in such haste and spirits. They would bait the buzzards with us if we attempted to ride over them when the rebels chased us back, etc. This running fire of badinage was not of long duration, for we were passing along at the trot and soon parted company with the malcontents.

There is nothing particularly exciting or delightful in thumping along at a trot in a cavalry column. The clouds of dust, sent up by the thousands of hoof-beats, fill eyes, nose, and air passages, give external surfaces a uniform, dirty gray color, and form such an impenetrable veil, that, for many minutes together, you can not see even your hand before you. Apparently, just at the point of impending suffocation, a

gentle sigh of wind makes a rift, and a free breath is inspired. Dust and horse hairs penetrate everywhere. Working under the clothing to the skin, and fixed by the sweat, the sensation is as though one was covered by a creeping mass of insects. Accumulations occur in the pockets; the rations come in for their full share, and with the bacon, particularly, so thoroughly do dirt and horse hairs become incorporated, that no process of cleansing can remove them. But there is no better appetizer than horseback jolting, and little squeamishness with genuine hunger. A hunk of dirty, raw bacon, with "hard tack," on a campaign, are partaken of with keener relish and enjoyment than "a good, square meal," when engaged in less arduous duty.

Shortly after crossing the North Anna River, a train of the enemy's ambulances was overhauled. In this capture was included a paymaster, with a large quantity of Confederate money. This commodity was free to all troopers who wanted it, but was valued so little that most of it was burned with the wagon which contained it. Some had, afterward, cause to regret that they had not burdened themselves with a few thousands of this rubbish. Flankers were thrown out on either side of the column, and, pushing along rapidly, we soon overtook and liberated about four hundred of our infantry, who had been captured in the wilderness, and were on the way to Richmond as prisoners of war. The greater part of the Confederate escort was also secured. Among the captives thus rescued were many officers, from the rank of colonel down. Their joy at their release was unbounded. They exalted the cavalry above any other arm of the service. But we paused not to receive their adulations. The column hurried forward to Beaver Dam Station, where, striking the Virginia Central Railroad, three trains of cars, two locomotives, and some prisoners fell into our hands. Several hundred stand of arms, and supplies for Lee's army, to the value of several millions of dollars, were included in the spoils. What the troops could dispose of was distributed among them, and the balance, together with the station and

cars, burned. The railroad was torn up in both directions from the station, and we bivouacked for the night in the immediate vicinity. Several times during the night attacks were made upon us, but they were met in such a manner as to discourage a long continuance.

Early, the morning of the 10th, we were on the move again, with flankers out upon both sides. The country passed over was, for the most part, well cultivated, ditched and fenced. The fields and houses had apparently, thus far, escaped the ravages of war. The flankers had instructions to take from the places along the route such grain and provisions as they might chance upon, which were needed for subsistence, but to commit no depredations. How they "chanced" upon stores, which even the proprietors assumed to know nothing about, is a mystery which one may not understand, even though he had charge of the flankers on the right of one brigade. It is astonishing what a wide latitude the needs of human subsistence extend over. The camp fires that night, just beyond the South Anna River, revealed that they comprehended, at least, biscuit, corn bread, ham, mutton, various kinds of poultry, butter, honey, preserves, and dried fruits.

About daylight, upon the morning of the 11th, in hot haste, we deployed, dismounted, as skirmishers, into the woods on our left, to repel an attack. The enemy, however, seemed to be satisfied upon finding where we were, and drew off after firing a few shots. The onward march was then resumed in a leisurely manner, along the Virginia Central Railroad, which had been torn up by the 2d Division (Gregg's), which now had the advance. It was a lovely day: the air was mild: the country charming, and we thought it was a holiday-time we were having as we rode easily along, the most common topic of discourse being General Phil. Sheridan, who had been assigned to the cavalry corps but a short time previous to its starting out upon the campaign. It was the unanimous opinion that he had, at least, demonstrated one thing—that he knew how to march a cavalry force with-

out exhausting it. He had already won the hearts of the command by his simple, easy, unostentatious demeanor. His special fitness, above all others, to be a cavalry leader was not at that time known, but we were nearing the field where was first established his title to the designation of "Cavalry" Sheridan. The head of the column had reached the junction of the Telegraph Road with the Brock Pike, near Yellow Tavern, when a rapid and well-directed fire was opened up by a rebel battery, posted on a hill to the left. General J. E. B. Stuart, with his Confederate Cavalry Corps, had thrown down the gage of battle, and it was promptly taken up. He was upon his chosen ground, well sheltered, with every advantage of position. In the action which followed, our whole corps was engaged, and every point within our lines was under fire.

Here, again, even more than in the wilderness, we were fighting an unseen enemy. We could hear and feel, but not see him. The rebel line was stretched from the pike along a range of hills skirted by woods, circling around and crossing the Telegraph Road. The pike and railroad, along which we had been moving, ran over nearly level, or only slightly rolling, ground, and, but for a scrubby growth of bushes to the left of the railroad, which afforded some concealment, was entirely open to the enemy's view. Our line was formed with the 2d Division (Gregg's) upon the right; the 1st Division (Torbert's) in the center, and the 3d Division (Wilson's) upon the left. Skirmishers were thrown out, followed by lines of mounted and dismounted men, who pushed across to the woods and secured a lodgement. From the offensive, the foe was compelled to assume the defensive. No time was given him to arrange his squadrons for assault. It was an enlivening spectacle to behold, in all directions over the field, regiments, or brigades, upon the trot or gallop, in columns of fours, companies, squadrons, or battalions, with batteries galloping into position, and here and there reserves drawn up in line as straight and motionless as stone walls. All this was observed while the 1st Brigade of the 1st Division was

moving up, under a brisk artillery fire, to engage in close combat. Passing by a long line of Confederate prisoners, and over ground strewn with the wrecks of battery wagons, dead men and horses, evidencing hot and effective work on the part of the 2d (Merritt's) and 3d (Devin's) brigades, we struck the cover of the woods. Into these the 5th and 6th Michigan regiments were sent dismounted; the 7th was formed in line of battle, facing the woods, while the 1st regiment was formed in column of squadrons, fronting to the right. This latter was a full regiment of one thousand men, having recently veteranized and returned with ranks filled. The woods formed a reversed J, behind the lower short arm of which the two regiments were sheltered. At the upper end of the J, upon high ground, at the edge of the timber, was a Confederate battery of artillery, which had got the range of our position, and was sending in its shots with most annoying accuracy. Placing himself at the head of the 1st Michigan, General Custer led it in a charge against the battery. As the squadrons wheeled to the left, around the angle of the woods, at the gallop, they preserved their alignment perfect, and with lusty cheers, launched out upon the charge over a surface broken by ravines, but open to the clean sweep of the enemy's guns. Fiercely roared the battery; never were pieces served with more celerity. Solid shot and shells, grape and canister tore through the ranks, making gaps, but the column never paused or faltered for an instant. The cheers swelled into a shout of triumph. The rebel guns are limbered up and away they go on the run; but two are overtaken and captured, together with two limbers filled with ammunition, and many prisoners. What, however, was of more importance, was the fact that this brilliantly-executed movement had secured an eminence commanding the rebel position, and practically settled the issue of the battle. Its success would hardly have been possible had it not been for the vigorous attacks of the 5th and 6th Michigan regiments dismounted in the woods, the 2d and 3d brigades, and the rest of the troops all along the line, giving the enemy full

employment and preventing him from instituting a counter-movement, to render nugatory the effect of the charge. And herein was first manifested the special military genius of General Sheridan, which was, having his forces well in hand, to strike the foe "tooth and nail," "horse, foot and dragoons," put him on the defensive, force him back, and when once started, keeping him going, hitting him blow upon blow as long as within reach.

The 7th Michigan, in column of fours, upon the trot, followed in the wake of the 1st regiment. As the former regiment passed along, a house, situated about one hundred yards to its right, burst into flames, ignited by the enemy's shells. The occupants, consisting of women and children, who had probably been hiding in the cellar for security, rushed out in a state of the most frenzied terror. Their frantic cries and actions were most pitiable. They were certainly brought to a full realization of the horrors of war. A wall of fire was behind them, a trampling mass of cavalry in front, while deadly missiles were flying all around. Some compassionate souls galloped out from our column and shouted to them, that a ravine near by afforded the most secure retreat; but this was all, in the way of succor, the exigencies of the occasion permitted. They were probably too crazed to heed the kindly suggestions offered. They were lost to view in the onward movement, but they hold a place in memory as one of the most striking features of that day's memorable engagement.

General Custer was upon the summit of the hill, from which he had dislodged the Confederate battery, his graceful figure erect in the saddle, and his face flashing with the glow imparted by participation in the successful charge but just concluded. With outstretched arm he pointed with his sabre toward a road at the base of the hill, and said, "Major Granger, charge that road with your 7th Michigan." Instantly rang out the Major's command, "*Front rank, SABRES! Rear rank, PISTOLS! Fours forward, TROT, MARCH! GALLOP!! CHARGE!!!*" Down the hill, across the brook, and up the road, into the woods, like a thunderbolt, went the col-

umn. Almost continuous discharges were blazed out from the enemy's carbines, smoke and dust enveloped all in a cloud, and horses and riders were blended. A barricade and obstructions, in the road, were lightly leaped, and the enemy, behind them, sent scurrying back in the hottest haste. Into the fugitives crowd the pursuers, and the dull thud of sabres descending upon hapless heads could be heard, amid the rattle of carbines and the cracking of pistols. But, just as the head of the column was well over the barricade, a junior major, from the rear, shouted an order to "*Right about, WHEEL,*" which order was heard, and obeyed, by all but about twenty-five (25) men, who followed in the lead of the senior major commanding. Back went the regiment, while the squad in front kept right on in its career. Now the clatter of hoofs, the clangor of slung carbines, empty scabbards and mess utensils, the shouts, oaths and imprecations of the rushing horsemen have grown faint. The carbines no longer speak in volleys, but singly, at intervals, and the crack of the pistol has ceased to be lively. The gallant Granger, as well as many another brave man, has fallen, and will ride no more to battle, while the survivors of the squad have been engulfed, swallowed up in the Confederate cavalry of the Army of Northern Virginia. Here and there one may be seen subject to the hostile demonstrations of numbers of opponents. Surrounded and hedged in, isolated from each other, all hope of escape cut off, submission was made by each one, singly, to peremptory demands of surrender, only, in several instances, to be shot down or cut down by new comers, constantly arriving upon the scene. Back, along the route of the charge, lay strewn, promiscuously, dead and wounded Federals and Confederates—the latter preponderating. Plunderers were already busy among the former. What, however, is entitled to the greatest prominence in connection with the spirited dash under description, was the fall of General J. E. B. Stuart, Confederate Chief of Cavalry, mortally wounded.

Besides the retreating column directly in our front, which was hurled back from the barricade, the Confederates were in

force in the woods immediately to the left of our line of charge. Apparently, about one hundred feet from the road, and a few hundred feet to the rear of the barricade, was a Confederate battle-flag, with a number of horsemen grouped about it. From this quarter we received a galling fire, and we returned it with our revolvers. The ground rose considerably toward the left, making objects in this direction, during rifts in the dust and smoke, more conspicuous. General Stuart was near that battle-flag, and there he received his death wound. Shortly after the charge had ended, a Confederate soldier came galloping up through the woods, spreading the intelligence that General Stuart was shot. In answer to an inquiry if it were true, an aide upon the General's staff—to whose notice we had only a few minutes before been introduced—replied, "Yes, d—n you, and we ought to kill every one of you." In response to the question, as to where the General was when shot, he pointed with his hand in the direction of the battle-flag, and said, "Right down there in the woods." Pollard, in his "*Lost Cause*," erroneously gives the date of the action of Yellow Tavern as May 10, 1864, instead of the 11th, and says that Stuart fell while leading a column in a desperate charge. There *was* a Confederate column of fours behind the barricade in the road, which gave way before the assault of the 7th Michigan, and through which those in the front of that regiment charged. It is not at all improbable that General Stuart had formed this column with the design of leading it out to the charge, in the endeavor to regain the position from which Custer had dislodged his artillery. He must have realized that, unless he could again occupy and hold that summit, the day was lost to him. The onslaught of the 7th Michigan, and the renewed activity of the dismounted forces in the woods, nipped any such project in the bud, and the fall of General Stuart just at that time put it at rest forever. There was not a single charge of a Confederate column that day, certainly not within the observation of those who belonged to the 1st brigade.

In obedience to the directions of the officer of the rebel

provost-guard, our Pegasus was dismounted, and the march on Richmond was resumed, only it would be more appropriate to call it a rush. Our batteries had opened a very rapid and uncomfortable fire, and our guard of honor became concerned for our safety. "Run, Yanks," was the exhortation, "for if you uns shoot we uns, we uns'll shoot you uns." Eight prisoners, wounded and lame, and weary, struck out at their level best, but neither they nor the provost-guard, could make head against the demoralized cavalry and artillery that fled, terror-stricken, from the shot of our guns. We narrowly escaped being trampled to death, so we got out of the way of the fugitives, and in the rear of a wagon train. In the midst of a drenching rain, in the darkness of the night, we floundered through the Virginia clay toward the Confederate capital. Although it was only about ten miles distant, such was the activity of our cavalry, and such detours were necessary to avoid them, that an almost steady march of two nights and days was required to reach it.



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